

Search is on for Ashland graduates

By Harry R. Weber

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ASHLAND — A state health official last night said she would consider using motor vehicle records to help locate some of the Ashland High School graduates who will be asked if they contracted cancer while living near the Nyanza Superfund site.

Officials have been unable to locate members of six graduating classes from 1972 to 1992. Suzanne Condon, director of the state Environmental Health Assessment Bureau, told members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee she may be able to tap into registry records to help find addresses for some of those people.

Officials in the next couple of weeks plan to send out a letter with preliminary questions to the 3,000 graduates as part of a health study on the effects the former dye factor had on young kids who played nearby. A more comprehensive questionnaire that focuses on a participant's medical history and other personal information is still being developed, Condon said.

One of the problems, Condon said, is that many of the graduates have moved out of state and have been hard to track down. Blue fliers have been posted around town to spread word of the study.

During the annual Ashland Day fair on Sept. 19, Condon will hand out more fliers. About 20 to 30 people have called the state Department of Public Health in the last few days after seeing the fliers. Officials also have set up a Web site where people can get information on the study.